

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-07

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8082

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEHRAN 4110

LIMDIS

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, IR
SUBJ: EMBASSY CONTACT WITH LEADERS OF ISLAMIC COMMUNITY

1. SINCE CIVIL DISTURBANCES IN QOM AND TABRIZ, I HAVE ASKED EMBASSY POLITICAL OFFICERS TO ESTABLISH CONTACT WITH LEADERS OF THE ISLAMIC COMMUNITY IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE A BETTER COMPREHENSION OF THOSE ISSUES WHICH ARE AGITATING THE MULLAHS. AS THESE CONTACTS HAVE DEVELOPED, THE ISLAMIC LEADERS HAVE INDICATED A BASIC LOYALTY TO AND RESPECT FOR THE SHAH, BUT HAVE SAID THAT THEIR ACCESS TO HIM HAS BEEN BLOCKED BY HIS ACOLYTES.
2. THESE SAME LEADERS HAVE ALSO INDICATED A DESIRE TO MEET WITH ME PERSONALLY AND TO ARRANGE OTHER MEETINGS BETWEEN ME AND SOME OF THE MORE PRESTIGIOUS AYATOLLAHS FROM QOM. I HAVE SENT WORD THAT I DO NOT INTEND TO MAKE A PILGRIMAGE TO QOM BUT WOULD BE PREPARED MEET WITH ISLAMIC LEADERSHIP ON NEUTRAL GROUND (PROBABLY IN POLITICAL COUNSELOR'S HOME).
3. IN ORDER TO ANTICIPATE AND ALLAY SOME SUSPICIONS, I DECIDED, IN COURSE OF A CONVERSATION ON OTHER MATTERS (REPORTED SEPTTEL) TO INFORM HUSHANG ANSARY OF THE ISLAMIC LEADER'S DESIRE TO MEET WITH ME AND OF MY INTENTION TO

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SEE THEM. AT THE TIME OF OUR CONVERSATION, ANSARY MADE NO PARTICULAR COMMENT. HOWEVER, THE NEXT MORNING HE TELPHONED ME TO ADVISE ME, "AS A FRIEND", THAT HE TOUGHT MEETINGS WITH "THOSE PEOPLE" WOULD NOT SIT WELL WITH THE SHAH.

4. I THANKED ANSARY FOR HIS ADVICE BUT TOLD HIM I DID NOT

INTEND TO BE EXPLOITED BY THE ISLAMIC LEADERS. I SAID I FELT
A GENUINE NEED TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THEIR ATTITUDES AND
THEREFORE INTENDED TO MEET WITH THEM DISCREETLY. I SAID I WOULD
HAVE NO OBJECTION IF HE WISHED TO CONVEY ALL THAT TO THE SHAH.
ANSARY SEEMED RELIEVED WHEN I SUGGESTED HE INFORM THE SHAH.
THIS PRESUMABLY PASSES THE BUCK ELSEWHERE AND HE HAS EXPIATED
HIS LOYALTY BY HIS "PERSONAL ADVICE" TO ME.
SULLIVAN

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NNN

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